

stalled as comfortably as possible, we proceeded slowly on our way to Critot. Every jolt of the cart on this stony road renewed our sufferings, and caused us to utter cries of pain. In one of the jolts my hand came in contact with my neighbour on the right, whose arm I felt already stiff under his cloak, and when he was taken out he was, indeed, a corpse. But I could no longer distinguish the surrounding objects, and must have been delirious. At the entrance of the village was a barn, where we were placed side by side; a few bundles of straw spread on the barn floor formed a bed for our mutilated bodies. A smoky candle, whose waning light trembled on the walls, barely lit this large room, leaving the corners and the beams of the roof in darkness.

Racked with fever and thirst, we had just enough feeling to suffer. Thus passed the night, and in the morning we witnessed the arrival of six or seven physicians and surgeons, brought here by special train from Rouen. They were provided with their cases of instruments, and wore their aprons ready for operations. Without loss of time they applied themselves to dressing our wounds. As for me, my left leg and right thigh were fractured, my left arm shattered, and my head badly cut, besides other wounds. Alas! poor me, who had confided so much in my ardour, and in the strength of my twenty years, and had resolved to fight the enemy so valiantly.

No sooner were my wounds dressed than I was placed on a litter and carried to the station, to wait for the train which was to take us to Rouen. The report of our deplorable accident had already spread all over the country, and attracted a crowd, who were moved to pity on beholding us. The waiting-room in which I was placed contained four or five wounded. I recognized one of them, Coulmy, an old soldier of the Crimean and Italian campaigns, whose breast was fairly covered with medals. He had enlisted in order to gain the Cross, and now

the poor man's left leg was completely crushed. We were kept waiting more than four hours. The inquisitive multitude crowded round the waiting-room and looked eagerly through the windows, loudly giving vent to their sympathies. I heard the murmur of voices indistinctly, and in my feverish hallucination all the figures seemed to grin through the panes and dance before my eyes. At last the train arrived; we were installed in the cattle vans, so that we might not be incommoded by the seats, and started for Rouen.

All these movings had greatly fatigued me, and the last was not by any means the least painful. I saw the General Hospital of Rouen, with its grating, its long avenue, planted with linden trees, and its old blackened buildings. By especial favour, Paul V . . . and I got a little private room, while the other wounded were conveyed into the public wards. Our room was in the second story, and contained four beds. Beside me lay an honest pensioner of the hospital, in front Paul V . . . , to the right, a poor old man in his dotage, whose regular and monotonous wail continued far into the night. Between the two beds at the far end was the window, whence were seen successively the avenue, the walls of the hospital, and the entrance to the station. The iron bedsteads were provided with little white curtains, hung on rods. The furniture consisted of some straw-bottomed chairs, a table of varnished wood, a stove in the centre of the room, and on the wall hung an old cracked piece of canvass, which represented a cardinal, whose name I could never discover. An unskilful hand had touched up the cardinal's features, the ample scarlet robe and curling moustaches giving him a resemblance to Richelieu. The fresh paint, with its bright colours, looked like stains on the tarnished background. How often, during my long sleepless nights, have I seen this figure come out of its ungilt frame, walk towards my bed, and, fixing on me its vacant gaze, fill my